

OXENHAM, POET OF MARVELOUS POPULARITY—GERARD'S NEW BOOK

KIND OF POETRY PEOPLE LIKE TO READ IN WAR TIMES

More Than 500,000 Volumes of John Oxenham's Verse Have Been Sold—Masters Is a Greater but Less Popular Poet

"MODERN poetry is in a bad way," remarked Doctor McFabre. He had been looking over several volumes of verse that lay on my table. "Whenever I see a new book of verse I feel like reading an old one. I know then that I shall not be disappointed." "Your liver must be out of order, doctor," said I, "or you would take a more cheerful view. There has been a revival of poetry in recent years and your children will be as fond of the moderns as you are of Keats and Wordsworth. It may be that some of the freakish verse will be considered remarkable for its poetic insight in a few years. Do you know, my friend Andersen was in here the other night and he was interested in Kreyenborg's anthology of the new verse. The sweetest of it seemed to please him the best. Of course he did not admire it, but he was curious about the kind of stuff that men and women would write and call poetry."



EDGAR LEE MASTERS Whose fourth volume of verse is just published by the Macmillan Company.

have been slain. Here is the way he puts his belief in the triumph of right: Not on the flaming field across the seas Alone, this fight for God's supremacy, But in the hearts of men throughout the world. His banner is at last unfurled, And from their thrones the Powers of Hell, By the whole world's united will, Are being hurled. This is not great poetry. It expresses the obvious in an ordinary manner, but it finds an echo in your heart, doctor?"

"I wish that he had left out some of the things he has included," I went on while the clergyman was reading. "There is Doctor Scudder's Clinical Lecture, for example, which is a study in hereditary insanity with such unpoetical lines as these: Then may's another matter: Parents may have normal nervous systems yet produce Children of abnormal nerves and minds. Caused by unstable sexual germs, I could get along without all of that sort of stuff. Yet I must admit that it is part of the message which Masters has set out to deliver. He is studying the development of society on the theory that sex is at the base of it, and he chooses examples of abnormal manifestations of sex. He might say that many of them are normal, and seem otherwise only because of an artificial social organization. But the instinct of the race would be against him. His new book will not be so popular as the 'Spoon River Anthology,' for the reason that its general level of interest is not sustained. Each poem in the anthology was a clear-cut gem. His tool slipped in fashioning some of the new poems."

"That is great," Doctor McFabre remarked with a deep drawing of the breath as he finished "Widow La-Rue."

"Yes, as poetry it is far greater than anything that is contained in John Oxenham's new book," said I, "but probably ten copies of Oxenham will be sold to one of Masters's. Oxenham is one of the marvels of modern literature. He is an Englishman, who published his first volume in 1913. The publishers consented reluctantly to issue it. Yet 228,000 copies of it have been sold to date. It was 'Teas in Amber.' More than 200,000 copies of 'All's Well,' another volume, have been sold, and purchasers have bought 129,000 copies of 'The King's Highway.' The new volume, 'The Flery Cross,' will sell as well as any of them, if I am not mistaken. Can you tell me of any other poet so popular that within five years there has been a demand for 550,000 copies of three volumes of his verse? I don't know of any."

"Why does it sell?" Owen asked. "There is no mystery about it," said I. "Oxenham does not write above the heads of the average man and woman. He has no poetic theory to put over. He is not an imagist or a symbolist, but a plain man moved by the same things that move you and me. He has religious faith and confidence in the overruling goodness of God. And he happens to have written when the English-speaking peoples were ready for this sort of thing. The war has made us think of life and death. It has renewed the religious life where it was withered and dying. There is a feeling that God will not let unrighteousness triumph and that He will not leave the widowed and the bereaved un comforted. Oxenham has written words of hope and consolation that have soothed and cheered and made life possible to those whose souls

FACE TO FACE WITH KAISERISM

Mr. Gerard's Second Book About Germany an Intimate Revelation of Imperial Rule

The second book by James W. Gerard, former Ambassador to Germany, is an amplification and supplement to the first. "My Four Years in Germany" was what its title indicated—a record of his experience as Ambassador. "Face to Face With Kaiserism" is more than a record. It is an exposition and interpretation of the significance of Kaiserism. Mr. Gerard gives a more detailed picture of the physical and mental attributes of the Kaiser in the new book than in the old. He pictures him as a man of unbounded ambition and he quotes the famous remark about the Kaiser's five herms, each of whom failed of world dominion, with its conclusion: "I have dreamed a dream of German world empire and my mailed fist shall succeed." He discusses the attitude of mind of the German public, its admiration for pomp and show which the Kaiser fostered, its subservience to the ruling class and its unimaginative-

The chapters devoted to the social customs are illuminating—more so perhaps than anything else that has been written on the subject. He saw much of court life and writes of the knowledge and insight. His interpretation of it is that of a genuine democrat. His discussions of the autonomy disclose the truth in which the Kaiser walks. He had built up a machine, according to Mr. Gerard, in whose power he found himself at the beginning of the war. Mr. Gerard reports that he was told by the head of one of the great German banks that when the Kaiser was called upon to sign the order for mobilization he hesitated, but that he was told by the members of the General Staff threatened to break their swords over their knees if he refused that he signed. He gives this story for what it is worth and allows the reader to draw his own conclusions. We shall not know the exact truth about it for many years, if at all.

Mr. Gerard's book is really worth while. All those who read the first of it will find the second still more interesting, because more intimate and more detailed. It gives a picture of Germany which neither the words and the information of Americans.

FACE TO FACE WITH KAISERISM. By James W. Gerard. Reprinted from "The Atlantic Monthly." Copyright, 1918, by George H. Doran Company, N. Y.

ABIGAIL ADAMS AND HER TIMES

Life in Philadelphia and Elsewhere Described by the Wife of the Second President

The story of the wife of the second President of the United States and mother of the sixth is well worth reading, especially when it is told by Mrs. Laura E. Richards, the daughter of one of America's most distinguished women, Julia Ward Howe. In her "Abigail Adams and Her Times," she gives us a vivid picture of the life of one who did more than any other woman of her generation for the formation and upbuilding of the nation. Born in Weymouth, Mass., the daughter of the lawyer, she lived the greater part of her life in the country near Boston, and from her letters and those of her husband and his diary we learn what this life was, especially in the pre-Revolutionary period. It was a very strenuous life, owing to the British rule. Writing to her husband in Philadelphia, she says: "An order has been given out in town that no person shall be seen to wipe his face with a white handkerchief. The reason I hear is that it is a signal for meeting." The larger part of the book is devoted to this time and to her simple life. But we go with her to Paris and London and attend court receptions, and as wife, first of the Vice President and then of the President, we get an occasional glimpse of social life in New York and Philadelphia. There she dined with Washington and found him "more than usually social. He asked very affectionately after you and the children, and at table he asked the surrounding company to take them to the table."

When Philadelphia society was in those days we may learn from the Duke of Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, who writes: "It would be an exaggeration to say in the numerous assemblies of Philadelphia it is impossible to meet what is called a plain woman." The most singular event in this eventful life was when the seat of Government was transferred from Philadelphia to Washington. During the drive to the new capital our President and his wife got lost in the woods, "where we wandered two hours, finding no guides or paths. Fortunately a straggling black came up with us, and we engaged him as a guide, to extricate us out of our difficulty; but words are all you say, from Baltimore to Philadelphia, and then to Washington, in my name." Two high-typed Americans are portrayed in this book, devoted to each other, their children and their country, and in the present life of France, are invited to read a book, written especially for them, "Young France and New America." The author, M. Pierre de Lanux, spent his early years in France, and at first-hand the possibilities of Franco-American relations through the co-operation of the younger generations, and his studies have impressed upon him the "value of mutual knowledge between the youth of France and America." Accordingly he begins with what he calls a portrait of the young Frenchman in the outbreak of the war, which then gives the main results of his investigating work in this country. He holds that the two characteristic virtues of America are charity and invention, and that it seems to be designated for a certain form—not of world-dominance—but of world leadership. Then follows a sketch of the promises of co-operation, in which he calls attention to the new spirit of economic activity in France, especially in the work of the women. An enthusiastic chapter on literary interchange introduces to his readers several French poets. One of the two who have been most inspiring to the young is the Belgian, Emile Verhaeren, on whose international glory he comments. There can be little doubt that M. Lanux has succeeded in the mission of which this book is the endearing expression. He settings forth of the value of mutual knowledge.

Love and War

"The Red Cross Barge," by Mrs. Belle Lowndes, is a war novel slight in bulk but weighed with interest. The young German surgeon, perpetuated and learned, shows that the human side has not been lost by all this. He is the hero of this story, if it may be said to have a hero. But there is no doubt about the heroine. She is there, and all there: a golden-haired French nurse. The period is in the early days of the war, when the Germans were driving toward Paris. The Herr Doktor, in charge of a royal patient, commandeers the Red Cross barge, in which Lucienne Bonhomme is attending her French "blesses." It is a case of love at first sight on the Herr Doktor's part. Then, to his astonishment, comes the ordered German retreat. His eyes are opened to "humaneness," and its menace to the girl he loves. The story works up vividly to a well-earned climax. It has interest for its pictures of the early war and for its keen revelation of the Herr Doktor's psychological changes.

Second Fiddle

To play "second fiddle" is usually accounted a humiliation to be avoided at all costs. Especially is this the case when it comes to affairs of the heart, and the young woman who elects to play such a part is regarded as either very brave or very desperate. The heroine of Phyllis Bottomley's well-told story, "The Second Fiddle," is certainly not despondent though she is well enough and sufficiently discerning to realize where her happiness lies, so that when her betrothed is killed she does not become a wounded warrior, she quietly assumes the role of comforter and protector. The scene of the story is laid in England, and there is enough of the war touch in it to give zest to a not overwrought theme. THE SECOND FIDDLE. By Phyllis Bottomley. The Century Company, New York. \$1.50.

A Horse as a Hero

Alfred Oliviant, who nearly a score of years ago joined the ranks and took a foremost place in their front of literary lovers of dogs, with his "Bob, Son of Battle," which became a classic fit to be put on the same shelf as "Ivan and His Friends," will now leave with his story of a horse in "Boy Woodburn." One does not read Anna Sewall's "Black

Beauty" any more, and doubtless it would be found very old-fashioned and lacking in literary graces. Mr. Oliviant's story is not old-fashioned, and it is full of felicities of style and mood. There is a girl in it, too; a real girl despite her tomboyhood. She dwells, not among the quiet "ways of Dove," but amid rough men, yet her essential feminine sweetness was unspoiled by the contact, while the lives and characters of the men were illumined in the beams of her starlike virtue and charm. A story to be read for its interesting psychology, its delightful presentation and its beautiful spirit.

The "Living Age"

Littell's "Living Age" a magazine loved by many old-fashioned readers who still measure the worth of a periodical not altogether by the jauntyness of the four-color flapper on the cover, has been taken over by the publishers of the Atlantic Monthly. The announcement is of considerable interest to the world of those who were once known as "polite readers." The "Living Age" has a continuous history ever since 1844, and was founded to reprint the cream of British current magazine offerings. It has played a valuable role in making available to American readers many of the best articles appearing in the English magazines, as few of us over here have time enough to hunt those out for ourselves. Its scope is now to be widened to include selections reprinted from French and other publications. Under the active management of the men who have made so great a success of the Atlantic, a magazine once called "highbrow," this honorable figure in our literary arena may look for renewed lease of life.

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An Apartment House Crime

William Johnston has demonstrated that a mystery story, with its action taking place in a modern city, has as great possibilities as the old-fashioned tales of castles with secret passages and plotting soundrels of an earlier day. His "The House of Whispers" is the house is a twelve-story apartment building in New York—contains as much excitement as is wholesome for nervous persons to experience in an evening before going to bed. The hero is a poor young man who has been asked by his great-uncle to take care of his apartment while he goes to the country for the summer. The old man, a millionaire, confesses in private to his kinsman that he has heard mysterious sounds in his apartment and asks the youth to listen for them and report. The youth, as he is about to take up life in his new quarters, accidentally meets a young woman whose mother's apartment is on the same floor as that of his great-uncle. He discovers that some one is trying to blackmail the girl's family because an elder sister, who is about to marry, had contracted a secret marriage some years before with an adventurer, and had had the marriage annulled. He tries to find out who the blackmailers are. While he is thus engaged there is a murder in the apartment below his and he is arrested for the crime. In the meantime, he has heard the mysterious whispering and has found a note on his bed one hour left there while he was asleep. He can find no explanation of what is happening. Of course, he is acquitted of the charge against him, but not until the great-uncle has been murdered in his own apartment after he had returned to the city to help clear his nephew. When the explanation comes it is so simple that the reader will wonder why he did not think of it before. Mr. Johnston ought to write more tales of this kind, for there is an undoubted demand for them.

THE HOUSE OF WHISPERS. By William Johnston. With Illustrations by Arthur William Brown. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. \$1.40.

Franco-American Co-operation

The young men and women of America, who are interested in the present life of France, are invited to read a book, written especially for them, "Young France and New America." The author, M. Pierre de Lanux, spent his early years in France, and at first-hand the possibilities of Franco-American relations through the co-operation of the younger generations, and his studies have impressed upon him the "value of mutual knowledge between the youth of France and America." Accordingly he begins with what he calls a portrait of the young Frenchman in the outbreak of the war, which then gives the main results of his investigating work in this country. He holds that the two characteristic virtues of America are charity and invention, and that it seems to be designated for a certain form—not of world-dominance—but of world leadership. Then follows a sketch of the promises of co-operation, in which he calls attention to the new spirit of economic activity in France, especially in the work of the women. An enthusiastic chapter on literary interchange introduces to his readers several French poets. One of the two who have been most inspiring to the young is the Belgian, Emile Verhaeren, on whose international glory he comments. There can be little doubt that M. Lanux has succeeded in the mission of which this book is the endearing expression. He settings forth of the value of mutual knowledge.

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